



May 18-20, 2011 -- Dubai -- Arab media suspicious of WikiLeaks

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Editors, senior reporters, and news bureau chiefs with various Arab newspapers and television networks showed almost near unanimity on the issue of WikiLeaks at the 10th Arab Media Forum held this week in Dubai.

Many of the Arab journalists gathered at the conference agreed with this editor's comments that WikiLeaks's release of Secret and below State Department cables was highly selective and appeared to be furthering an American political and foreign policy agenda, including the demonization of certain governments opposed to U.S. hegemony, including Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, and Libya.

This editor also stressed that much of the content of the cables was purely speculative in nature and mostly derived from local diplomatic reception gossip and translations of foreign language newspapers, including tabloids. I also noted that certain political appointee ambassadors all had an agenda to advance with the presidents who they lavished campaign cash upon and that could be seen at play in some cables from embassy postings such as London and Paris.

With over-classification of information by the Bush and Obama administrations, this editor maintained that much of the cable information was not even sensitive to U.S. national security interests.

Panel member Sylvie Kauffmann, editor in chief of *Le Monde* in Paris said that her paper found some very valuable information in the State Department cables that revealed U.S., foreign policy thinking at a top level and did not agree that all the information was based on gossip. There is a definite gulf between what the Arab media believes about WikiLeaks and how it is veiwed by the Western corporate media, including *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, and *The New York Times*, which made pre-publication deals with the organization.

I responded by pointing out that the Bush administration lured the United States into war based on forgeries of intelligence and that the same situation may easily exist with WikiLeaks, given the selective nature of the release of cables; the redactions by newspapers working in conjunction with the State Department and, possibly, other agencies; and the digital nature of the documents in question.

I also pointed to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's motivations and the financial support his organization received from global financial manipulators like George Soros. In addition, in a 2007 Washington Post article, Cass Sunstein, President Obama's "information czar" publicly praised WikiLeaks and said the site had "immense potential." Sunstein has championed the use of the Internet for waging disinformation campaigns through a process called "cognitive infiltration."

I also pointed out the negative effects of the WikiLeaks disclosures arising from prosecution and torture of Army Private First Class Bradley Manning and criminal investigations of other whistleblowers. After the WikiLeaks release of the cable traffic many potential government sources have dried up, afraid to be discovered communicating with anyone in the media. For that, professional journalists have nothing to thank Mr. Assange for.

The Arab Media Forum opening address was delivered by Emad Abu Gazi, the Culture Minister of Egypt. Also in attendance at the opening ceremony was Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, the Vice President of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Dubai.

Press roundup: [Gulf News, May 18, 2011.](#)
[Khaleej Times, May 18, 2011.](#)

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